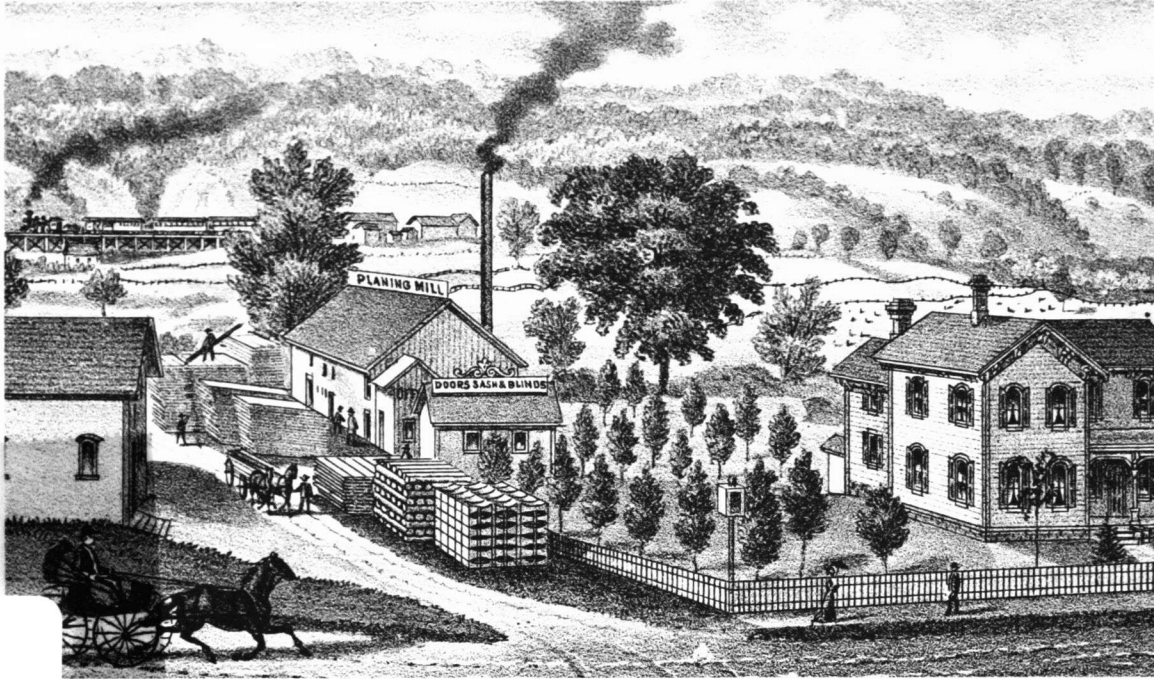


## HOLLAND



*Planing Mill and Residence of Horace Selleck.*

Robert E. Brown

The Town of Holland is situated on the east line of Erie County and near the south-east corner, being bounded on the north by the Town of Wales, on the west by Colden, on the south by Sardinia, and on the east by Wyoming County. It comprises Township eight, range five of the Holland Land Company's survey, and contains 36 square miles.

The first settlement in the township was made in 1807. In that year, Arthur

Humphrey, Abner Currier, and Jared Scott purchased land in the valley. True, others had settled the Genesee Valley and followed the Great Trail, at one time the old Indian Trail, but no white man had made a permanent home in the Holland Hills.

Courageously, Althea Humphrey and her family packed their belongings to accompany husband and father into the country west of the Genesee County, which they believed would be free from fever. From Vermont in a covered wagon over hill and dale is no small journey.

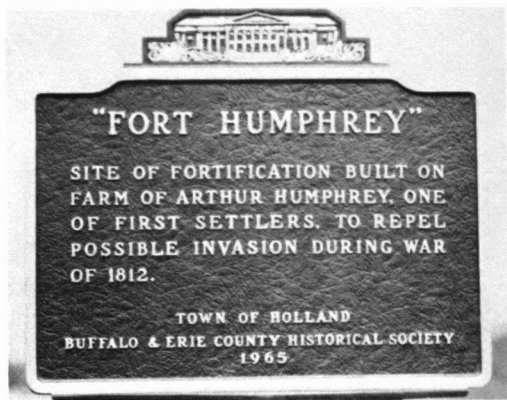
Abner Currier persuaded his wife, Susannah, to wait until he had found a suitable site and home. He and Jared Scott would return for their families. The long and dangerous trip was made with slow moving oxen and covered wagon. They traveled past fertile valleys of the Genesee, full of growing wheat, to a higher and healthier climate. Finally they came to a lovely valley with a stream sparkling clear and blue. Humphrey chose his site first and all three men went to work to build him a log cabin which was easy, as this valley had a thick background of woods growing on each side of the valley.

Currier chose a site near what is today known as the Oscar Heitman farm. Humphrey had all the land north of Currier. No doubt Scott chose a place nearby. Currier and Scott went back for their families in 1808. It didn't take long for news to travel in the East that Humphrey, Currier, and Scott had found a fertile valley where there was plenty of room for others.

The first school in this settlement was opened in the Humphrey neighborhood just before the War of 1812 and was taught by Abner Currier during winter months.

In 1808-09, Ezekiel Colby, Nathan Colby, and Jacob Farrington located on the hill east of the valley known as Vermont Hill. Immigrants came to the area with considerable rapidity until the outbreak of the War of 1812.

During the War, the usual alarm was felt in the township, relative to the British and Indian invasions, but more than the usual preparations were made to resist them. In the summer of 1813, the inhabitants combined and built a stockade on the farm of Arthur Humphrey, closing about an acre of land.



*Marker on the Fort Farm.*

From six to seven hundred logs were cut 15 feet long, hewed so as to fit closely together and set upright, side by side, about three feet in the ground.

Loopholes were cut for muskets and rifles, and the defenders of the stockade might reasonably have expected to repel a moderate sized force of either Indians or whitemen. This rude defense was usually called Fort Humphrey, and the Humphrey farm was known as the Fort Farm. The stream running through this section began to be called the Cazenovia Creek after a well known agent of the Holland Land Company.

During the war some unknown person started the erection of a grist mill. In 1814, Colonel Warren and Ephraim Woodruff of Aurora bought and completed this mill. In the spring of 1815, Warren bought Woodruff's interest. He built and occupied the first house. He also built a saw mill. The millwright was Robert Orr, and in the autumn of that year, Warren sold his property to Orr.

In 1816, Caleb Cutler and his son William settled on the farm later

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owned by Sylvan Cutler. They came on foot all the way from Vermont, and drove five cows the entire distance.

The year of 1816 was called the "Cold Summer" because there was a frost every month of the year. Food was very scarce, hardly enough for the settlers. That autumn many families arrived in covered wagons from the east. There was much suffering among the 40 families and quite a few deaths. Joshua Barron opened the first tavern in 1816. In 1817, Leander Cook opened the first store in the area. Trade was not very good as the settlers had not recovered from the previous cold summer due to the crop and food shortage.

In the autumn of 1817 the death of John Colby occurred under circumstances which were long remembered by the early settlers. He lived on the east side of Vermont Hill, and just after the first snowfall, which occurred in November, he went out into the forest to look for his cattle which had strayed away. As he did not return during the day nor the succeeding night, the settlers turned out to search for him. They followed his pathway which was not entirely hidden by the snow for several miles through the forest, hills, and ravines. Toward nightfall the body of Mr. Colby was found lying at the foot of a tree. He had died there from, no doubt, the cold when he had become exhausted and could go no further. He was only a short distance from a settler's cabin.

The first town meeting was held in the spring of 1819. The following officers were elected: Arthur Humphrey, Supervisor; Samuel Corliss, Town Clerk; Richard Buffum, Caleb Cutler, and Elisha Newhall, Assessors; Richard Buffum, Jr., Amaziah Morey, and Chapin Wheelock, Commissioners of

Highways; Samuel Corliss, Constable and Collector; John Abbott, Constable; Charles Crook, Poormaster; Rudolphus Burr, Elon Clark, and Ira Johnson, Commissioners of School; Elon Clark, Ira Johnson, and Abner Nutting, Inspectors of Schools. There were 17 road districts now which would indicate a considerable number of settlers.

Isaac Dickerman located on a farm next to Humphrey's Fort Farm in 1829, where he built one of the few brick houses in the town. Today his home is owned by Raymond Wanamaker. The window sills are made of slab stone which was brought from Vermont on the first boat that came up the Erie Canal. The fireplace is made from Vermont marble brought to Holland by a team of oxen.

A large number of Germans settled in Holland, and located in the Hunter's Creek area as early as 1840. Their numbers increased until they formed a large part of the settlers in that region.

Some of the settlers were Catholics who went to Sheldon to worship. Many were Baptists who worshipped in a small house on Philip Fisher's land about 1850. Sidney Sleeper donated land for a church building in 1865. It was known as the German Lutheran Church, later named the German Baptist Church and now the Hunter's Creek Community Church.

During the Civil War many young men volunteered. Their graves are in Holland cemeteries today, along with those of Revolutionary War Veterans.

Since the Civil War, Holland has become a leading dairying area of Erie County, and is well known for the manufacture of cheese. The construction of the Buffalo, New York and Philadelphia Railroad through Hol-

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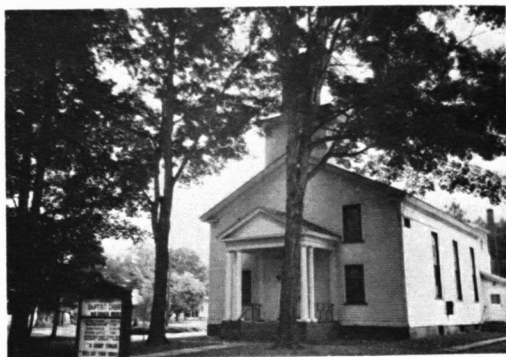
land in 1871 greatly increased the facilities for the shipping of farm products. The village of Holland has grown rapidly, and the town as a whole is probably equal in prosperity to the average rural town in Erie County.

Dr. Parker was the first physician in 1825 and was followed by many others. These doctors drove horses and buggies in the summer, and traveled by sleigh in the winter and they made many home calls. C. W. House was a dentist here in 1877.

The Holland House was built in 1835 by Jonathan Paul; he was succeeded by his son, David Paul, who carried on the business for many years. The first post office was established in 1822. Mr. Lyman Clark was the first postmaster. A Rev. Thompson printed a weekly newspaper for Holland residents.

A large tannery at the south end of the village was built under the direction of Guy C. Martin, who was the Superintendent for about 15 years. It had a capacity of 20,000 sides of sole leather annually. It was increased in size until it was one of the largest tanneries in the state, covering about ten acres, employing about 60 men during the busy season, producing from sixty to seventy thousand sides of sole leather per year. It had 600 vats.

In 1876, Horace Selleck built a planing mill in which he employed ten people. A cheese factory also was built in 1876 by L. L. Horton, later taken over by Richardson and Beebe. Blacksmith shops, wagon shops, and paint shops were built by J. L. Ferrin and M. F. Wilson. The blacksmith and wagon shop of M. Keller was established in 1871. Nathan Morey, a son of the Nathan Morey who was one



*Methodist Church.*

of the early settlers in the village, was a tanner and currier who devoted most of his time in making shoes. Edward Wallash was a cabinet maker and carried on a furniture store and made coffins after 1873.

A Baptist Church was started in 1829 in the village. The Methodist Church was built in 1871. The first Catholic Church was built on the corner of Park and Garfield Streets.

Fires took their toll of businesses and industries in Holland. In 1893, the Holland Bank was organized and located in the Whitney Block which was destroyed by fire in 1910. The Basket Factory on Pearl Street burned in 1929. The Holland House, built about 1858, and later known as the Lenox Hotel, also burned. Charles C. Lowry opened a hotel in 1874 on Main Street that burned in 1890. It was rebuilt by Anthony Chmielewski and is presently owned by John Hileman. In 1891, the Holland Water Works built a water system, using wooden logs for water lines. In 1896, the Fire House was built, and Henry Spaulding was elected as the Fire Chief.

In 1906, the Tanners started to make wagon springs and wheelbarrows. Dur-

ing World War I the lumber mill made army cots. Tanners also manufactured jack springs, neck yokes, and whipple trees. They sold to Sears Roebuck and Company. The son, Claire and wife built a greenhouse about 1923. Later a gift shop was added. Then their daughter Mary made and sold her candies nation wide. At one time they had 17 greenhouses, with 30,000 rose plants. They went out of business in 1968.



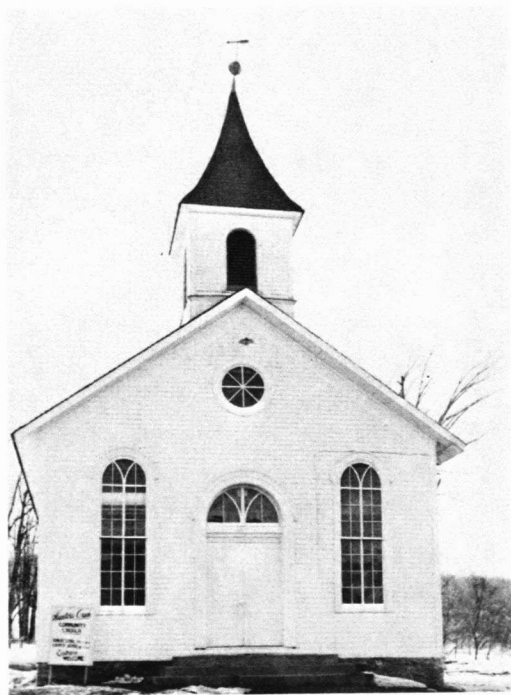
*First Baptist Church.*

The Union Free School was located where our Town Hall is today. It was remodeled or changed three times to accommodate the pupils. In 1928, Mr. Bensley, the district superintendent, called a meeting of the people, from Holland and the surrounding territory to meet in the old study hall which was crowded. Mr. Brumstead was principal at that time. Mr. Bensley explained the new centralization law in which the

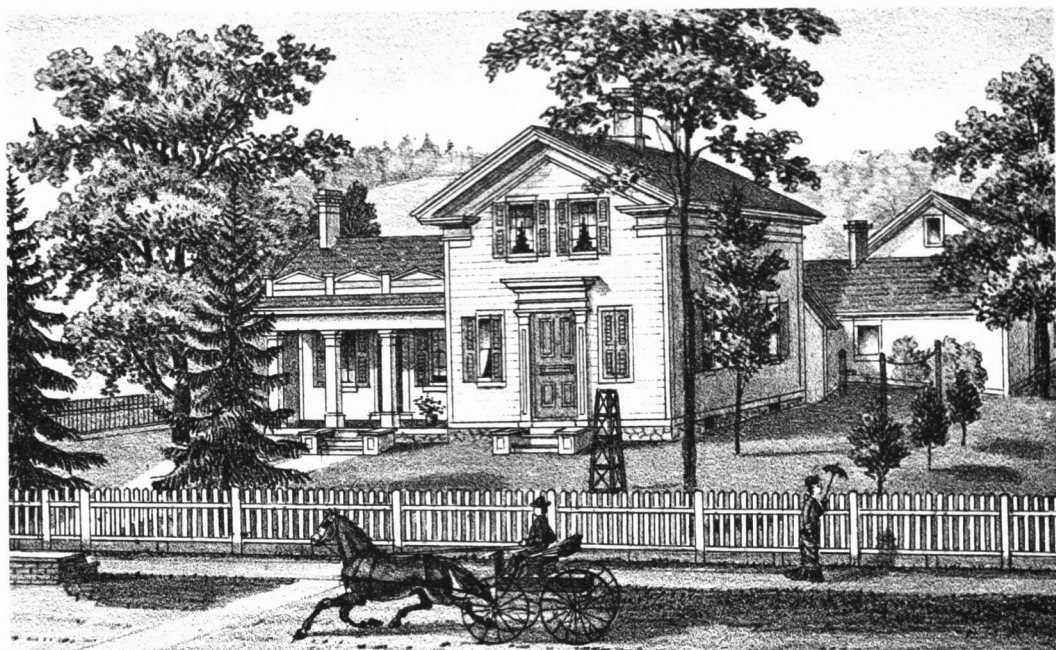
state would pay the greater part of the building costs, if the districts would only vote to centralize.

It was an entirely new thought, and many of our people were fearful of losing their democratic rights if they centralized. Finally in June of 1931, the district voted to centralize, and the school started to shape up and was finished in 1933. In 1954, a new addition was added, also one in 1960. At present a new school is being built for the Senior School which will open very soon.

Today, there are the Trimold Plant, a division of Fisher-Price Toys Inc., located east of the railroad tracks; Ramblewood Manufacturing Co., just south of Vermont Street next to the tracks; Vimco Manufacturing Co., just east of the tracks on Vermont Street.



*Hunter's Creek Community Church.*



*Residence of Dr. A. C. Osborn.*

The Holland Raceway Inc. is one of the largest in the area. Also there are three garages, H. L. Draper Trucking Inc., service stations, one roofing and sheetmetal company, antique shops, grocery stores, barber shops, insurance companies, one pharmacy, and the Frank H. Brink Post No. 607 of the American Legion.

The influx of the Polish-Americans started shortly after World War II and has steadily increased. Many of the families have located on the farms east and west of the village.

This history gives an idea of the prosperity and growth of Holland during its early years.

## BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY HILLS

Ye Holland hills, how still ye lie  
Beneath the sunny summer sky.  
Nor rustling breath of summer breeze  
Is felt among the hillside trees.

Adown each shaded cool ravine  
The summer quiet reigns supreme  
Where springtime torrents roaring go  
To join the Cazenovia's flow.

When autumn winds go sweeping by,  
The storm-clouds gather in the sky.  
But Nature's moods are naught to ye;  
Disturb not your calm majesty!

The chill of winter's frosty breath,  
It turns your green garb brown in  
death.

But cold nor time can e'er efface  
Your undulating lines of grace.

Ye Holland hills, your towering  
strength,

It guards the valley's winding length  
An emblem of the mighty powers  
That guard these devious lives of ours.

The sunset view from hill-top high;  
The valley stream that glances by;  
The little town asleep below;  
The busy trains that come and go.

The western slope of green and brown;  
The sunset shadows slanting down;  
The dark'ning grove where night-bird  
calls,

A picture makes for memory's walls.

And when some day, with pride and  
care,

Our Mother Nature's pictures rare  
Are hung the halls of art to grace,  
Our Holland hills might claim a place.

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